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Tourism Okanagan Style

Ogopogo

It's Here, It's Huge and It's Hard to Find. Lake Okanagan's Ogopogo monster has been the object of serious search since the early 1900's. If the Ogopopo is only a legend, a topic of conversation, it is a pretty lively and enduring one. We all agree there's definitely something out there.

The story goes back long before the days of the white man and the First Nations peoples certainly believed there was a creature in the lake. They were so sure that they made sacrifices when they ventured into certain sections of the lake. Stories abound of the lake creature that could drag a horse under water or raise a wind storm when someone entered the waters near its home. There was a time when the shoreline of the Mission Creek area of Kelowna was patrolled by men with guns to protect their homes from the Ogopogo. Great hunks of meat were placed on iron hooks and attached to light cable and set out as traps.

Until 1924 the Ogopogo monster was known by the Indian name N'ha-a-itk (pronounced Nuh-haw-aw-it- ck) but at a Vancouver Board of Trade convention held in Vernon, newspaperman Bill Briddlecomb composed the following little ditty at a post-meeting banquet and N'ha-a-itk was re-named Ogopogo.

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"His mother was an earwig;
His father was a whale
A little bit of head
And hardly any tail-
And Ogopogo was his name
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In the Okanagan region there are many Ogopogo watchers and hunters with books to their credit such as Arlene Gaals' Ogopogo: The True Story of the Okanagan Lake Million Dollar Monster. Descriptions of the Ogopogo vary, of course. This is to be expected. People do not always see the same thing in the same manner and generally under stress of excitement, which the appearance of Ogopogo generates, the faculty of detailed observation is not too keen.

But, broadly, the descriptions do follow the same general pattern. The length is placed from thirty to seventy feet. The body is long and slim and dark in color. It is described as from a foot to two feet in diameter. It is suggested there is a forked tail and the head varies from looking like a horse to being bearded with whiskers. Most reports that the creature moves in undulating waves producing the characteristic humps seen by many.

Whether it is a monster fish or a prehistoric left-over many photographs have been taken and there are many confirmed believers. Maybe you yourself will see the legendary Ogopogo when you come vacationing in our sunny Okanagan.